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A PSYCHOANALYTIC INTERPRETATION OF GROUP FORMATION AND BEHAVIOR

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I

In 1918, Dr. W. F. Ogburn presented to the American Economic Association at Richmond an analysis of the psychological background of the economic interpretation of history.¹ His paper furnishes a starting-point for the statement of some further social implications of the biogenetic psychology which may prove new and useful in the interpretation of events and in the synthesis of political, economic, and psychological theory.

As with Dr. Ogburn's paper, no attempt is made to prove the points herein made. For the most part, in fact, they are simply applications of some of the new concepts in psychology to perfectly familiar events, in a way which links two or three fields of learning and makes psychology a helpmeet and illuminator of social science.

Briefly, Dr. Ogburn's thesis was that the frequent apparent obscurity of economic causes in history is due to the stigma which civilization, especially Christian civilization, has usually attached to selfishness in politics, and, one might add, the more immediate pressure which politicians are always under of winning support by assurances of common interest in the good of the whole group. The social disapproval and disadvantage imposed upon the free expression of greed or self-interest have led to the camouflage of motives which are basically economic.²

Dr. Ogburn recognizes in these political processes certain common mental tricks or mechanisms which have long been

¹ *American Economic Review*, Supplement, March, 1919.

² Interesting parallels of this thesis were ingeniously illustrated by Dr. Patten, in his *Development of English Thought*; cf. pp. 15 ff., 108-9, 112 ff., 131-32, 145 ff., 205-6, 257, 277 ff.

classified by the psychoanalysts in work with individuals. By followers of Machiavelli and Treitschke, perhaps, the tricks are consciously employed. Many politicians, however, find it necessary to deceive themselves before they can deceive their public. The subconscious holds in leash the real wish which gets its fulfilment or compensation by justifying itself in the name of social welfare, patriotism, revenge, culture, religion, rescue, necessity, or self-defense.

According to Dr. Ogburn, however, all these motives are fundamentally economic in origin or necessarily become economic before they are transmuted, rationalized, or re-evaluated by politicians and historians.

It is at this point that further inquiry is suggested; viz., in the psychoanalysis of the economic motive itself. It is complex, built up of various simplex motives rooting in instinctive needs or mechanisms of behavior for which there is no apparent expression or release at present except through economic channels. Carleton Parker's paper of the year previous partially covered this ground. He stated the well-known economic and psychological causes of industrial unrest and analyzed the process from cause to effect in terms of modern psychiatry—impulse, suppression, psychosis. But he confined his analysis to anti-social groups, especially the I.W.W. of the Northwest. Similar analysis can, it seems to the writer, be applied profitably to group motivation in general. An attempt at such analysis will here be approached through a brief preliminary description of personality in terms of the "new" psychology.

II

The individual may be roughly symbolized for our purposes (Fig. 1) by a circle inclosing arrows representing impulses, wishes, strivings, "motor sets," as Holt phrases it. At birth we may assume that these impulses are largely inchoate, being temporary "amoebic" expressions of the total prenatal biochemical energy of the individual pushing out to the environment in various instinctive responses, the chief of which are nutritive and "auto-erotic."

These impulses do not tend at first to be introspective. Many of them are at mutual odds, but they are not even organized

enough to realize much mutual conflict. What conflict there is, is normally not deep seated; it is easily forgot. The child soon gets over a cry. But, because the directions of these impulses are widely distributed, there is an approximate equilibrium, an unstable equilibrium, such that a stimulus from nearly any quarter will bring a quick response in that direction, yet diverted with comparative ease in another direction by a different stimulus. The undeveloped personality is *suggestible*, whether child or savage.

Yet even in undeveloped personalities there is often a "trend" or "bent"—a predominance of certain strong instincts, or groups of impulses which, by composition of forces, give the individuality

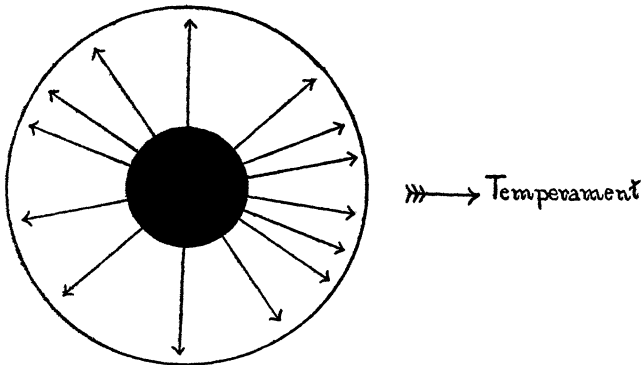


FIG. 1.—Symbol of an undeveloped personality. A general trend to the right is indicated, but the wishes are unorganized, at cross-purposes. The dark center represents the original font from which life-energy (soul, libido, élan) wells up and out at various levels. (Cf. Jelliffe, *The Technique of Psychoanalysis*, diagrams.)

a certain initial direction. In any case, the equilibrium is soon broken, whether from within or from without; and certain desires are subordinated more or less permanently, more or less successfully, to others. Crude organic impulses are refined, combined, recombined into the more complex interests, specific desires and wishes. The real dynamics of these interests still, however, root back into primitive, often unconscious, sources.

It used to be the fashion to conceive society as created in the image of an organism. It may be useful, at least, to reverse the analogy and to conceive the impulses in the individual as in some sort a society, proliferating, gradually differentiating into groups,

"high-brow" and "low-brow," with its subconscious roughly corresponding to the inarticulate public, its suppressed complexes to the "submerged tenth" or "rebel reds," and its focus of consciousness and behavior to society's dominant class activities. Sanity (a state approximated but never absolute) in the individual is comparable to social justice.¹ Some individualities (the idiotic) fail ever to organize. Still others (the neurotic) organize unsuccessfully or disastrously their warring impulses.

The foregoing analogy will not hold good throughout, but will make clearer the concept which follows. For the formation

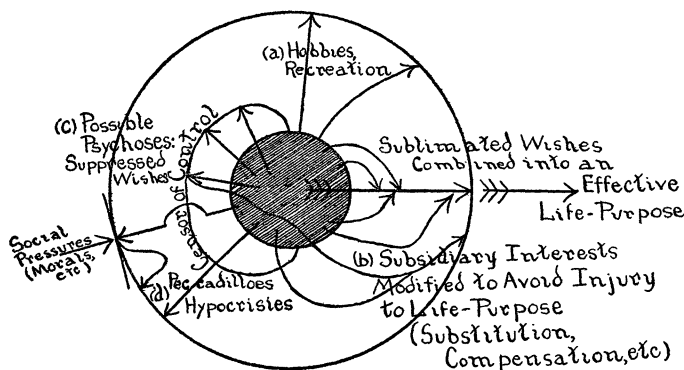


FIG. 2—Symbol of a developed personality. Strong polarization of impulses into a life-purpose; other impulses (a) expressed as hobbies, (b) modified to serve main purpose, (c) suppressed, and (d) dodging or delinquent.

of personality may be stated in terms of the organization of its impulses into a working whole, just as the formation of a state may be stated in terms of the harmonization of conflicting interests. (See Fig. 2.) Some impulses are suppressed, some are diverted, some are sublimated, some are encouraged and draw others to them. Some outlaw impulses escape, or remain concealed in respectable company. The whole becomes shot through with a purpose or design, like the lines of force in a magnetic field. The more highly organized personalities are recognized by their drawing or driving power, their concentration, equanimity, and singleness of purpose, and their effective relation to their environments.

¹ Cf. Giddings, "The Ethical Motive," in *Democracy and Empire*.

They have acquired "character." In psychological terms, they have synthesized, organized, and sublimated their total energy in relation to a reality principle. Their energy is economized by self-knowledge and conscious control of impulse, and a surplus is available for definitely influencing the environment. The will becomes free in the degree that this process is accomplished.

This pattern of personal organization is not, however, determined merely by competition between impulses within the individual. That competition is itself largely set in motion and the handicaps set by the conditions of the environment.

Relative normality of an individual would then consist (to adapt Dr. Patten's definition) in the harmonious organization of one's impulses in relation to a given environment; an ideal environment would make such normality possible for everyone. Under present conditions such normality is possible for very, very few, though many can attain it in such measure as to be indifferent or hostile to social change. Such are our conservative classes. Stand-patters are not necessarily happy or content, but their problems of personal adjustment do not seem to them possible of solution through any change in society at large. They may of course, be quite as wrong in their judgment as the I.W.W. are in theirs. They may fantasy a Utopia of the past instead of a Utopia of the future.

III

Conscious thought may be roughly defined in terms of mental behavior at a point of relation or adjustment between an individual and his environment. The personality may be conceived as a bunch of stored and potential behavior of this sort, conforming to "distribution curves," with modes and variants. Conscious thought, however, seems in general to follow the point of stimulation; though stored internal stimuli or reinforced (over-determined) impulses and interests are often sufficiently powerful to override immediate sensory stimuli.¹ Thought occurs as a function of adjustment, and is most conscious in the actual process of adjustment. Delay often seems to increase the keenness of desire and of satisfaction, by accumulation of affect.

¹ An artist fails to notice a mosquito bite when absorbed in his sketching.

If a given state of affairs thwarts or fails to give an expression to some native instincts of an individual, we have at once a damming of flow, a congestion of wishes (affect-laden complexes), and probably acute consciousness and thought.^{*} If the given state of affairs causes a similar conscious want in many people, it is a social condition causing a social problem. Max Eastman once wrote, in substance, that in politics the important thing is not what men think but what men want; the purpose of thought is to tell them how to get it. This fits in well with the concepts outlined above, and leads to their application in the field of political and historical interpretation.

Various processes of socialization may be interpreted in terms of wish-fulfilment mechanisms, oftentimes unconscious. These will be discussed here under the general headings of group formation, maintenance, and growth; group composition and solidarity; group interrelation, competition, and success; group sovereignty and control; group conflict, compromise, and amalgamation; and group secession and decomposition.

GROUP FORMATION, MAINTENANCE, AND GROWTH

Consciousness of resemblance, like consciousness of difference, develops from biological sources in response to organic (later economic) needs. It is a socializing factor in that it serves to release instincts in social behavior and permits their satisfaction in group activities.

Imitation is not altogether blindly mechanical. It follows lines of least resistance. Or, rather, stimuli are responded to and behavior imitated with relation to the adjustment-needs of the organism. Imitation implies original similarity of behavior mechanisms which crave exercise. But imitative behavior may not occur or will not become habitual unless it prove organically satisfying, i.e., wish-fulfilling.

^{*} Though, occasionally, in the face of unique circumstances the individual (or group), lacking appropriate behavior mechanisms, fails to react until too late, or only vaguely "doesn't know what ails him." Just as chemists, lacking radio-sensitive nerves, were burned by radioactivity before they knew it; and just as savages ascribed bullets or diseases to devils, or conservatives fail to adjust to a new social order.

Whenever an environment is such as to stimulate a similar set of behavior mechanisms with similar affects in a considerable number of people, group formation has its natural soil. There seem to result naturally awareness of wants, concomitant reaction to similar stimuli, like-mindedness, consciousness of kind and of common interest, and collective behavior or co-operation. There arises a true social group, possibly an organization or even an institution, or a social movement, if the co-operation prove permanently effective in satisfying needs and wants. Individuals may join already existing groups for similar reasons. (See Fig. 3, p. 340.) Further aspects of group growth will be taken up under the heading of group competition.

GROUP COMPOSITION AND SOLIDARITY

A group may serve interests far different from its ostensible purpose. Furthermore, the individuals in a group may be in it from fundamentally widely variant motives. One thinks at once of examples such as the readers of a given book or newspaper, or the difference between Senator Lodge and an Alabama dorky as co-members of the Republican Party; but the differences may be more subtle. The real motives served, or wishes expressed, in the choice of a college or a club, for example, are far more complex than is the obvious educational or recreational purpose of the group, which is merely a net resultant of the behavior through which the various wishes of individuals find expression. The motives of group-joining may not even be conscious. Such is, perhaps, the condition of neurotics in social work, "purity" work, or suffrage campaigns.

It is in the motives of group composition that we shall find the most important phases of socio-analysis suggested by Dr. Ogburn's paper. For, while the ostensible purpose of a group or "movement" or campaign is obvious, its growth may have been fostered by those who consciously and deliberately, or subconsciously and hypocritically, or unconsciously and naïvely, are using its collective strength for very different ends, personal or factional. And, inasmuch as economic motives are admittedly powerful, especially when backed by wealth, it is natural to find

those so motivated and backed using, for example, patriotic "drives" to serve their private interests. This fact does not preclude the active presence of many, even a majority, of sincere patriots. In fact it is their presence which leads both to the camouflage which Dr. Ogburn analyzes and to the usefulness of the group for ulterior purposes.

I think a concrete illustration will be of value at this point. (See table, p. 343.)

The example taken is a selection from the membership of an imaginary church. A similar analysis could be worked out for a political party, a chamber of commerce, or any other group.

To represent diagrammatically in two dimensions dynamic conditions which demand at least four dimensions is obviously impossible. Many complex psycho-social relationships have to be omitted entirely. Enough cases are given to exemplify the common psychological mechanisms of combination, compensation, compromise, substitution, rationalization, transference, and sublimation, conscious or unconscious.

The stages of recognition of kind, perception of common interest, concurrent action, combined volition, organization, and co-operation are here assumed to have taken place. The group is a going concern or even a chartered institution, with a definite ostensible purpose.

In each member certain interests may be consciously dominant. These interests may or may not root back into more primitive but less conscious or repressed material—instinctive demands which the individual unfamiliar with unconscious mechanisms might not admit even to himself. In each member there may also be subordinate interests, more or less conscious. The group, in this case the church, may serve either the dominant or the subordinate needs of the member. Religion itself (the ostensible purpose of the group) may be either a dominant or a subordinate interest in the life of a member. Religious association is indulged in by many for whom religion is not a dominant wish-harmonizer or integrator. Religion, being itself highly complex, will serve to satisfy a variety of instinctive material, much of which is in an otherwise unexpressed condition. The appeal of the church is to

all the types just described. Further, with the increasing fulfilment of people's instinctive desires in worldly reality, those controlling the church extend its appeal to include interests not primarily spiritual, in order to increase or maintain solidarity, mass, and influence, and thus serve the purpose of the dominant group. Members joining on the basis of these special appeals, like those who join from shrewd "ulterior" motives, merely use the church organization to help fulfil their special interests, whether dominant or subordinate. Institutional churches extend these appeals indefinitely.

Such "use" of an organization to fulfil irrelevant desires of its members is apt to be relatively harmless if it is not exercised by a subgroup powerful enough to pervert the primary social purpose of the group and thus betray its members and the general public. Such factions are often self-deceived. Other factions if disillusioned may secede individually or collectively.

Church members as typified in the accompanying table therefore fall into three rather loosely classified groups: (1) those in whom religion is, at least ostensibly, the dominant conscious motive; (2) those in whom it is a secondary motive, involved in church membership and activity; and (3) those in whom there is no real religious interest, the appeal being on irrelevant grounds. Founders and active members will be apt to be found in the first and second groups, though a shrewd self-seeker from group three might also be a founder. Ordinarily they are persons in whose lives religion serves as a harmonizing, energizing, assimilative principle which is therefore projected as a dominant interest. Some members, on the other hand, are mere drifters, who could hardly tell why they belong. Many, again, are thwarted or secretly disappointed in life; to them religion is primarily a reconciler, a consolation, a hope of wish-fulfilment in a future life, or by proxy.

What interest is sincerely dominant in a church member depends upon the individual and the occasion. The interests indicated in the schedule (see table) indicate merely general trends, or net resultants of behavior. The final column gives the formula of the psychological mechanisms through which various interests are satisfied by membership. In many cases it is a "substitute

COMPOSITION OF IMAGINARY CHURCH

Church Members	Suppressed Interests, If Any, Involved in Church Connection	Conscious Dominant Interests	Subordinate Interests, If Consciously Served	Mechanisms of Wish-Fulfillment
Clergyman	May be any of several listed for members in same column	Religion	Personal ambitions; self-preservation; family affection	Personal tastes and demands as well as life-purpose fulfilled by profession
Clergyman's daughter	Strong father image	Religion	Interest in a young assistant minister	Waning interest in church may be supported by loyalty and by a new "transference"
Broad-minded, well-rounded layman	.....	Religion	Other interests consciously correlated to service of God	Co-ordination of wishes promoting harmonious satisfaction
Church "pillar"	Inferiority complex; desire for prestige	Religion	Social service	High position in church will vindicate self-esteem
Mystic	Introverted libido; fantasies; mother-fixation	Religion	Aesthetic Tastes	Satisfaction, in symbolic theology, of longing for escape and security
Bachelor	Thwarted in love long ago	Religion	.....	Unconscious substitution
Spinster (founder)	Strong father image	Religion	.....	Transference to God image
Woman (founder)	Sex interest in minister	Religion	.....	Unconscious fulfilling of suppressed interest
Neurotic	A major suppressed complex	Religion	.....	Resolution of conflict by confidence and consolation
Neurotic	A secret "sin" to be overcome	Religion	Self-esteem	Acquisition of self-respect through imitation and self-control fostered by church
Former drunkard	Suppressed complexes causing drunkenness	Religion	Self-esteem	"Emmanuel Movement" straightened out suppressed conflicts; escape from reality in religious symbols
"Misfit"	Various internal conflicts and resistances	Religion	Disappointed hopes reconciled	Compensation in belief of future rewards
Negative personality	.....	None	Herd instinct	Church is the "proper thing"
Clergyman's wife	Self-assertiveness	Love of husband and children	Religion	Identification of interests with husband's, vicarious ambition, great family love, greatly strengthen attachment to church; religion alone insufficient thereto
Widower	.....	Longing for wife	Religion	Partial compensation by conscious substitution; also hope of reunion
Childless parent (founder)	.....	Longing for children	Religion	Partial compensation by conscious substitution
Mother	.....	Love for children	Religion; morality	Sunday school will conserve children's morals

COMPOSITION OF IMAGINARY CHURCH

Church Members	Suppressed Interests, If Any, Involved in Church Connection	Conscious Dominant Interests	Subordinate Interests, If Consciously Served	Mechanisms of Wish-Fulfillment
Soldier	Mother's code against fighting	War; success in army	Religion	Church sanctions fighting
Architect	Desire to display or project personality; desire for immortality	Ambition for creative work	Religion; aesthetic tastes	Contacts bring contracts; church group and building please temperament
Scholarly teacher	Same as above	Same as above	Religion; intellectual appreciation	Brainy sermons and church forum are stimulation
Poor author	Instincts for display	Ambition	Religion	Consolation for thwarted ambition and lack of fame; made much of in the church
Social worker	Interest in suffering	Service	Religion	Religious challenge to service and faith in future; victory through self-sacrifice
Unselfish capitalist	.....	Power through finance	Religion; altruism	Stewardship doctrine reconciles interests
Professor	Inferiority complex	Ambition for power	Religion	Church of same denomination as the college helps prospects
Laborer	Complex of inferiority	Self-preservation	Religion; social instincts	Lonely, enjoys company but usually afraid to come, or too tired or poor; projects a grudge
Poet	.....	Aesthetic life	Introverted imagination	Ritual, symbol, atmosphere are congenial and suggestive
Selfish manufacturer	Poverty complex; self-centered childhood; thwarted altruism	Money	Love of wife	Family life helps starved instincts; church attendance keeps wife's esteem
Young merchant	.....	Business profits	.....	Church brings trade
Lawyer	.....	Love of wife	Ambition to succeed	Church brings contacts and clients; wife likes church
Corrupt politician	Guilty conscience	Politics; ambition	Self-esteem	Attendance and contribution mask guilt from others and from self
Society belle	Display	Social ambition	Sex, self-assertiveness	Fashionable contacts in church
Young man	Sex interest	Shifting interests	Conformity to morality of parents	Church sanction on dancing permits indulgence and releases from parent image
Boy	Domineering temper	Athletics	Family affection	Desire of parents and chance to organize church baseball team

formation" or "compromise" expression for some more original impulse, which gains a partial or total outlet through the church, whether or not there be in addition a sincere interest in religion.

In the case of an ostensibly non-economic group like the church, there is obviously much complexity of motive underlying its membership. Even, however, in the case of frankly economic groups, the motivation may be very complex. They are composed of individuals whose motives if analyzed would prove to be non-economic in the ordinary material sense. Love of power, prestige, or display, of comfort, leisure, or pleasure; parental and sexual instincts; the instincts of workmanship and achievement—all these may enter as dominant or subordinate motives in industry.¹

In the case of a non-economic organization the appeal to motives for membership other than the ostensible purpose of the group seems like bastard social economy. In political economics the appeal for members on non-economic grounds may be equally insincere. It may, however, have a legitimate basis, if it be an appeal through the economic to the real impulses which give rise to the "economic motive."

GROUP INTERRELATION, COMPETITION, AND SUCCESS

The same individuals may be aligned in scores of different ways, with the same or other individuals, for the fulfilment of sundry strivings. (See Fig. 3.) They form the interrelating links between many groups. Some people are habitual "joiners."

A group of any degree of complexity may be, like the organized personality of Figure 3, roughly likened for illustrative purposes to a magnetic field, polarized around the major purpose of the organization, which is a net resultant of the specific stimuli, the nature of the units affected, and the general environment; the environment would (in the case of the group) include the wishes of persons and groups external to the immediate group, such as contributors, prospective members, "public opinion."

Groups are regrouped in larger groups, with less definite bonds of common interest but interrelated by individuals who belong to more than one subgroup. (See Fig. 4.)

Whether a purpose is ostensibly or actively dominant in a group depends upon the general social situation, which therefore

¹ Cf. Ordway Tead, *Instincts in Industry*.

determines which groups "fall off" in membership. Large circles in the diagram indicate roughly larger groups or classes within which there are certain common wishes and therefore interlocking membership. Each smaller group is symbolized by a small circle. Overlapping circles represent interrelated groups. Infinite dimensions would be needed to represent the actual situation. Net

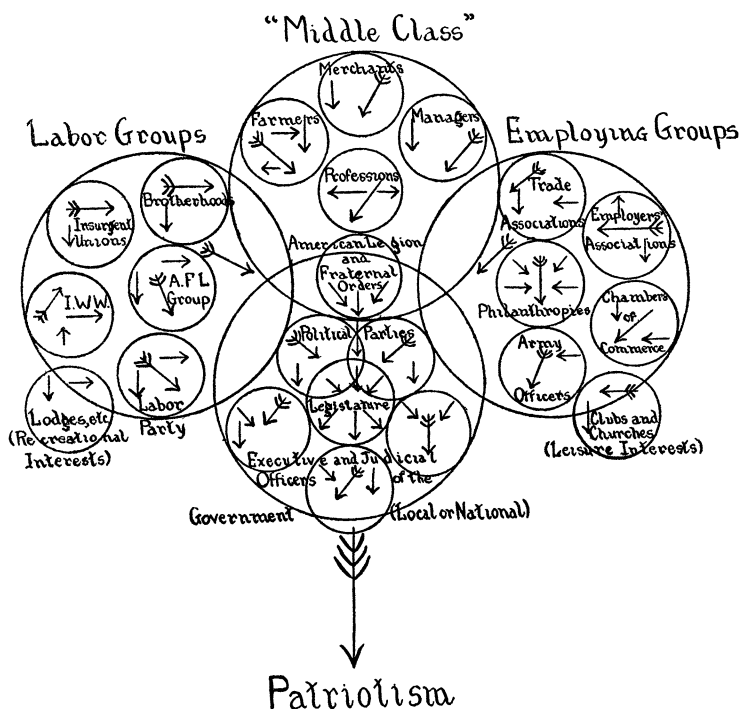


FIG. 4.—Crude symbol of group interrelation based on wish-fulfilment

resultant purposes of groups are indicated by heavy arrows, lesser motives by smaller arrows. The direction of arrows represents, in a crude way, the direction of each interest with relation to the broad contrasts between social classes.

The analogy is that of composition of forces in physics: the class purposes are resultants of group purposes; group purposes are resultants of individual wills; and individual wills are resultants

of the conscious and unconscious wishes of the individual in relation to any given situation.

The more thorough and complex the system of interests and of interrelated wish-fulfilling groups, the more "advanced" the evolution of the society. Progress, however, of course involves increasingly harmonious and economical readjustments, rather than mere complexity.

Most groups in present society require money or work for their activities; one's "joinings" and the social fulfilment of wishes go, therefore, according to the principles of comparative marginal utilities and diminishing returns. Magazines, parties, athletics, churches, alumni associations, festivals, charities, levels of the leisure class, come to mind as easy examples. (Cf. Figs. 3, 4.)

When, however, a given group finds a "common interest" in some unfulfilled wish, it seeks to forward its purpose by increased membership. If there be two groups with similar ends, there will be competition for membership in so far as the real wishes are selfish to each group. Frequently this involves appeal to different motives in other people, who may thus be persuaded that the desired result will also fulfil some supposedly legitimate wish of theirs. This leads to rationalization—the writing of plausible publicity. Witness the range of motives appealed to in Liberty Loan or prohibition campaigns. For selfish interests, however, the substitutions and excuses furnished are usually such as to appeal to some motives which are less intense but more generally shared than the special interest which primarily motivates the campaign. The suppressed wish then gets its fulfilment through some less inhibited wish-channel. The ostensible purpose is true in a sense, but less dominant or dynamic, and not alone capable of motivating the behavior demanded by the affect-laden wish.¹

Hypocrisy might be defined in terms of such substitution. Thus, a self-analytic person may feel a sense of guilt (internal conflict, repression) when perfectly legitimate motives are evenly balanced or mixed in his conduct. But, on the other hand,

¹ Cf. Bernard Shaw's criticism of the British Ministry's elaborate justification of war in contrast with the popular simplicity of motives, or, the defense of tolerated prostitution by the "best citizens" under the old régime.

the selfish motives may, by these very processes, become sincerely obscured or secondary in the minds of the "disinterested" or "indifferent" people whom we call the "public," in relation to a given issue.

It is in the foregoing way that political and economic and even moral theories gain currency and power. Some theories are advanced "before their time": i.e., they do not rationalize the cravings of an existing group. Even if, in origin, they be purely "scientific" (a possibility which the extreme psychoanalyst might deny), theories "prove true" only in so far as they meet and rationalize the desires of a successful group. Success itself may be defined in terms of wish-fulfilment or organic wish-harmony.

GROUP SOVEREIGNTY AND CONTROL

A well-organized minority in a group gains a majority by more or less skilful appeal to the interests of the bulk of the group. Such behavior implies a previous clear-cut consciousness of common interest on the part of the dominant minority with respect to some unfulfilled desires, and especially regarding the means of fulfilment which has been thought out in relation to those desires. The more fundamentally similar the unfulfilled wishes, the more permanent and powerful a group or faction is likely to be.

Sovereignty or power rests not so much on physical force as in the control or potential release of force. Ultimately, dominant minorities are responsible to the power of their constituency. They retain control of that power by catering to the wishes of their followers; by use of the father image or mechanism of authority; by skilfully rationalized theories of wish-fulfilment through the *status quo*; by suppressing facts which would release conflicting impulses; by offering substitute expressions for anti-group desires, distractions from thwarted needs, or promises, compromises, and sops; or, *in extremis*, preventing new minorities becoming new majorities by using their existing power to prevent temporarily, though ultimately to increase, the development of common interest and collective action among the oppressed variants. The Prussian Militarist Junkers since 1849 have furnished examples.

GROUP CONFLICT, COMPROMISE, AND AMALGAMATION

While competition for membership may reach the point of conflict when membership becomes an end in itself, group conflicts are usually due to mutually antagonistic wishes, either with respect to a common interest (such as hunting-grounds or a doubtful state), or with respect to some policy or behavior which is doing or will do violence to the interests of one or the other group (such as trade relations with Russia).

It may often occur that, without the existence of another group whose "liberty" (wish-fulfilment) is curtailed by the very existence of its antagonist, either group would be entirely "normal." That is why the ideal business man and the ideal socialist are both so lovable when you take them separately.

When two groups have a grievance or conscious thwart in common, they will make common cause in their immediate activity, even though logically at odds in other respects; for the immediate activity is due to a wish which strives for fulfilment because of some current stimulus or thwarting, and the other differences, being less insistent for adjustment or satisfaction, are subordinated or suppressed into a less conscious sphere. Party and church, inter-college and sectional rivalries, inter-racial and international realignments, especially in the recent and present wars, suggest themselves as examples.

Groups with a similar interest not selfish to each group but common to both and capable of joint fulfilment will rapidly and easily amalgamate in the absence of egotistic minorities, or eventually in spite of them. The fusing of suffrage organizations, of parties, and of corrupt interests are examples in politics.

When two groups both have wishes, and their fulfilment is mutually exclusive, both are thwarted acutely and there is war—orderly or violent as the case may be. It is a function of civilized government to make such struggles few and orderly. Court decisions and arbitration boards attempt to harmonize thwarted interests—and occasionally succeed. They repress the crude pugnacity of injured personalities and, theoretically, give it a channel for relatively sublimated expression. Legislation and treaties attempt compromise, reciprocal concession, and substitution, just

as a mother does between two quarreling children. Reason is, for good or ill, secondary to wish-fulfilment. Witness the Peace Conference.

The so-called "social mind" ordinarily develops more slowly than that of individuals, because there are infinitely more complex adjustments and readjustments to be made before internal friction can be eliminated and a combination or organization of wishes can be found which will afford a *modus vivendi*—a psychological basis for group life.

GROUP SECESSION AND DECOMPOSITION

If a person finds a group to which he belongs committed to some policy or conduct which would thwart another of his interests he may have a mental conflict. He must take his choice. He may try to "swing his group." He may succeed if he can find or create a powerful enough faction. He will not often succeed if there is a real thwart or "grievance" widespread and dominant among the group. The most plausible arguments will not much avail, nor will the most logically unanswerable refutations of the group's "reasons." If he can persuade neither himself nor the group to reconcile, repress, or gloss over the conflictive wishes he must then sacrifice his personal wish to his loyalty-wish or herd instinct; or, he must secede or "get kicked out," and if possible join another group, whose dominant desires are similar to his own.¹

If a man finds two groups to which he belongs striving for things which are mutually antagonistic he must make a similar choice.¹

When some unforeseen set of conditions suddenly thwarts in a large number of people a certain set of desires which were previously fulfilled and therefore less conscious, new groupings are likely to develop, old groups are likely to "lose interest," and alignments shift as attention concentrates on the motives now thwarted, which thereupon become the dominant motives in all group activity.¹ Old grudges now repressed project their cumula-

¹ The opening years of the war furnished many tragic examples of these generalizations. In groups where conjugation or fission is in process, whether the conflict of interests is considered external as between two groups or internal as between factions of a single group will depend upon the degree to which consciousness of common interests has waxed or waned in the social mind.

tive affects into new channels and upon new objects, often over-determining the new group behavior all unconsciously.

IV

Political consent and "social justice" may be conceived as a function of the amount of freedom and fulfilment available for the wishes and interests of a population. For intimidation can only prevent rebellion or secession by making the instinct of self-preservation dominant over all thwarted desires. Fear, if it be the sole sanction of a government, must be increased at an accelerating rate; for thwarted impulses bring concentration of thought and feeling, and are thereby strengthened even while they are thwarted. Fear, therefore, has diminishing returns, reaches its natural limits as a deterrent, and brings revolution or crime. Justice, on the other hand, is the harmonization of wishes and of wish-fulfilment.

The unitary or highly centralized state finds it increasingly difficult to please all of the people all of the time. The "democratic empire" partly solves the problem through local geographic autonomy. The so-called pluralistic state of which Laski and others are writing might go farther in the same direction, by a further distribution of sovereignty and loyalty.

Thought, closer study of the environment, theorizing, point out to group leaders ways in which the unfulfilled or thwarted wishes of the given group can be fulfilled, if possible without thwarting the activities or desires of any other powerful group. Still closer study and experience may prove a given theory "false," i.e., unworkable or provocative of worse maladjustment, but until such time it serves. It is usually for or against the *beliefs* of others, rather than their desires, that the favor or antagonism of men (at least ostensibly) is directed. The psychoanalyst might call this process "projection." The Christian attacks ideas, not men. We cannot often "fight it out," so we attack each other's theories and try to "argue it out"—a sublimated kind of fisticuffs. And for very similar sets of unfulfilled wishes one man may claim economic remedies, another political, another religious. The various arguments about slavery and crime and

freedom of speech are typical. It is true that goods and services will satisfy most wishes, and many wishes can be satisfied in no other way. This is the real rock upon which the economic interpretation of history is founded. But all theories, including economic theory, are based ultimately upon the wishes themselves¹ rather than upon their means of satisfaction, which is itself often the subject of theorization; and the theories of a group may, therefore, in some cases be as sincere as any theory can be when held by a whole group, even though they may not refer to economic changes, appropriations, or acquisitions necessary to their fulfilment.

It may be any one of a dozen groups of impulses in unnumbered permutations that leads to a social theory and social action, and these impulses may in origin be entirely non-economic or only indirectly or secondarily economic. The social hygiene campaign, the men and religion forward movement, the factory legislation movement,² are possible examples. An economic basis may, to be sure, be the indispensable condition for the success of a reform of which the original motive was sincerely moral. In fact, the economic motive is frequently used by social workers as a camouflage for altruistic motives—witness the Bolshevik bogey and the economic arguments for playgrounds.

But only where the economic motive is recognized as or accused of being selfish or wrong does conscience or social censure inhibit it and give rise to camouflage and hypocrisy. And for such social hysterias publicity and discussion furnish the salutary catharsis of the body politic and psychoanalysis of the "public mind."

¹ Value might be defined in terms of power to fulfil or thwart wishes—one's own or others'.

² Certain altruistic wishes, if expressed in some theory which if acted upon would thwart powerful groups, can seldom find expression except in people who can "afford to be radical." The same wishes may be present in others, who can only express the same wish through some other theory which justifies the wish on some popular economic grounds.